

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Position Classification and Position Management Programs

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Personnel Management Branch

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Distribution: Headquarters, Areas, and Locations

This DIRECTIVE:

- States Agency policy and assigns responsibilities for the Position Classification and Position Management Programs.
- Is revised to clarify certain responsibilities and to include cross-references to related DIRECTIVES.

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1. REFERENCES

- Instructions for completing the AD-332 and formats for position descriptions (except for Category 1 research and ST positions) are provided in DIRECTIVE 432.1
- Policies, procedures, and instructions on format, preparation of case materials, and position descriptions for research (Category 1) and ST positions are provided in DIRECTIVE 431.3.
- Procedures for filing position classification appeals are contained in DIRECTIVE 439.1
- Procedures for grievance resolution over accuracy of position descriptions and/or assignment of duties and responsibilities are contained in DIRECTIVE 463.2, or applicable negotiated grievance procedure.
- Delegations of classification authority within ARS are detailed in DIRECTIVE 400.6.

2. ABBREVIATIONS

- ARMS - ARS Resource Management System
- DPM - Department Personnel Manual
- FPM - Federal Personnel Manual
- OMB - Office of Management and Budget
- OP - Office of Personnel
- OPM - Office of Personnel Management
- PD - Personnel Division
- U.S.C. - United States Code
- USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

3. FORMS

- AD-332, Position Description
- SF-52, Request for Personnel Action

4. DEFINITIONS

Position Classification is the practice and process of grouping/categorizing positions by occupational group, series, class, and grade according to both similarities and differences in duties, responsibilities, qualification requirements, and other position characteristics (e.g., nature and degree of supervision received and/or exercised, guidelines available, complexity, personal contacts, physical requirements, etc.). This process is carried out in accordance with Title 5 of the U.S.C., and regulations/standards/guides published by OPM and USDA.

Position Classification Review is a planned and systematic program to periodically review established vacant and filled permanent positions in ARS organizational units to insure continued accuracy of position descriptions and continued accuracy of pay plan, title, series, and grade allocations.

Position Management is the continuous and systematic management process of assuring that organizations, positions, and functions are structured efficiently and economically. It is the process which managers and supervisors go through to determine how many positions are needed, how jobs should be designed, and the type of organizational structure that is required to accomplish the functions assigned to their organizational unit. This process is pursued in accordance with OMB Circular A-64 (revised).

Position Management Review is a program typically conducted in concurrence with Position Classification Reviews to assure that functions are organized and staffed in the most economical manner consistent with effective program accomplishments; to determine the need for positions, and required skills/knowledges; and to assure the effective organization and grouping of duties and responsibilities among positions.

5. POLICY

ARS will develop and administer position classification and position management programs in accordance with all applicable laws, and the policies, rules, and regulations of USDA and OPM. The programs will serve the specific needs and requirements of the Agency; will help provide and maintain accurate and consistent classification of positions; and, will be the joint responsibility of PD and Agency managers and supervisors.

To implement this policy, PD and Agency managers and supervisors will work together to assure that:

- Each employee has a current and properly classified position description which adequately describes the work assigned to him/her.
- Positions and organizations are structured in accordance with sound position management principles (see the attached Exhibit).

6. AUTHORITIES

- Title 5 U.S.C., Ch. 51, as amended by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454)
- DPM Chapters 305, 312, 511, and 981, and USDA Personnel Letter No. 981-1
- FPM Chapters 305, 312, and 511
- FPM Supplements 305-1 and 532-1
- 5 U.S.C. 3104, 5341, 5346, 5348, and 5371
- OMB Circular A-64 (Revised)

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

PD will:

- Advise and work in partnership with supervisors and managers to formulate, develop, and maintain position classification and position management programs which meet Agency needs.
- Develop policies, procedures, and guidelines for the ARS position classification and position management programs.
- Assist managers and supervisors in the implementation, operation, and maintenance of sound position classification and position management programs.
- Classify positions in conformance with OPM and USDA (OP) standards/guides, regulations, and policies; conduct audits (desk, telephone, and/or supervisory) as needed; and observe any preclearance/prior approval requirements of OP.

- Conduct classification and position management reviews concurrently during the yearly ARMS process, and at other times as needs arise.
- Coordinate the development, review, and implementation of classification and job grading standards.

Supervisors/Managers will:

- Apply sound position management principles in assigning duties/responsibilities and in establishing positions throughout the organizational segment supervised/ managed. (See the Exhibit to this DIRECTIVE for information on position management principles.) Contact the PD servicing team and/or higher organizational levels to obtain advice and assistance in resolving position management problems.
- Certify, by completing Blocks 19-21 of the Form AD-332, that subordinate positions (including vacancies) are necessary, and the duties and responsibilities in newly established or redescribed position descriptions are accurate.
- Review all filled and vacant subordinate positions at least annually to determine if they continue to be necessary and accurate. This can be accomplished during the yearly ARMS process or when conducting annual performance appraisals.
- Inform the PD servicing team when subordinate positions (either filled or vacant) are no longer necessary. When a position description becomes inaccurate, redescribe and submit the new description to PD, through the appropriate organizational channel, using an SF-52.
- Advise employees of their duties and responsibilities, the status of proposed actions (and the expected impact on positions), the status of the current grade level as determined through the classification process, their grievance options, and their classification appeal options.
- Insure that all subordinates have an official copy of their current position description, including the completed Form AD-332.
- Provide opportunities (within available funding and in accordance with position management principles) for optimum utilization of employee skills and knowledges pertinent to the mission/function of the organizational unit.

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Exhibit
1 ARS Position Management Principles